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SCRIP TALK

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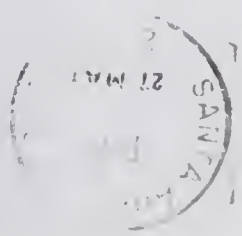

EDITOR COMMENTS 6/14

Tom Smith and I recently gave scrip and coal mining presentations to students in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. I found my group to very interested and asked many good questions. Tom had similar comments. We need to continue to communicate to our youngsters about coal mining history. If we don't, it will be lost.

When I was in Pennsylvania, I saw a lump of Anthracite coal. It was about the size of a basketball and looked like a piece of polished granite. I had never seen Anthracite before.

Note President Billy's write up about the recent NSCA show in Pikeville. Show went well.

Steve Ratliff has turned over the editor position for the Member Free Want Ads to Don Clifford. Steve thanks for handling this important part of Scrip Talk for 29 years.
All future ads are to be sent to

Don Clifford.
P O Box 65
St Albans, WV 25177-0065
304-727-4062, clff635@aol.com

A reminder---- The new West Virginia book is due around late May. Details are in Billy's article.

Next NSCA meeting is scheduled for Charleston, WV on November 1, 2014.

ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP !!!! Please submit nominations for all offices to Bill Fugera, fugewilj@cox.net, or Doug Tolley, dtolley@suddenlink.net, or Burley Williams, jlcc44@bellsouth.net. If you do not have an email source, please send a letter/ post card on or before August 20, 2014 to:

NSCA
28732 Charreadas
Laguna Niguel, Ca 92677.

If you are interested in an office please nominate yourself. Nominees will be published in the September Scrip Talk and voting will take place in November, 2014.

Contact List

Gary W. Childress
1622 Amanda Dr.
Hurricane, WV 25526
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Collect all coal mining scrip

Joe Manis
4829 Winnebago Dr.
Birmingham, Ala 35244
205-987-8642, jbuncys@gmail.com
Collect scrip and hardhat stickers

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qstewart@hotmail.com
Collect WV & KY scrip

John C. Taylor
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Collect VA scrip, tokens, Lumber

Ed George
66 Frost Ave
Frostburg, Md. 21532
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egeorge88fiero@verizon.net
Collect MD, Buxton & Landstreet

PIKEVILLE, KY

If you missed the Spring Meeting you not only missed a gathering of old friends and some new friends but, maybe some additions to your collections. I know for a fact that new scrip and information keeps coming to the light of day. An example was the three pieces of Davis Supply Company of Sewell, West Virginia that I was able to acquire. Doug Tolley said he had acquired at least one old collection a few weeks before the meeting and I'm sure the other vendors keep adding new sought after pieces as well. A few member collectors also brought their duplicates and in some cases acquired scrip outside their interest to swap or sell.

Doc Fletcher really helped to set up the location, Doc lives in Pikeville and was host of the Scrip meeting there several times, he knows just about everybody in town I think. The Hillbilly Festival was in full swing and you missed a treat if you missed that. My wife Shirley and I took a few hours to visit the festival, it's the largest festival in the state of Kentucky, it was an added reason to go to go to Pikeville. Life is just too short not to enjoy every day. Shirley is a Master Gardener and we found Doc is also. Doc gave us a tour of his fantastic, diversified and well maintained beautiful flowering garden with a meandering brook through it. Shirley and I personally know the hours and labor involved in a project such as his. Doc also had built a retaining wall along the banks of his mountain brook. We enjoyed refreshments with Doc and his wonderful wife in his unique garden house.

The new 4th edition of Edkins Vol. II, West Virginia only catalogue is supposed to be delivered the last of May. The cost is $45.00 plus $5.00 shipping. Member cost is $40.00 plus $5.00 shipping. Send payment to NSCA in care of Fennie Thacker, 7392 Big Ridge Rd., Haysi, Va. 24256.

The Fall Meeting will be held at the convention center in Charleston, WV, Saturday Nov 1, 2014 room 104 in conjunction with a coin show in the adjoining suite.

The election of new officers is in full swing, please send in your nominations to the nomination committee by email or snail mail ASAP.

Respectively
Billy W. Campbell

<u>Contact Lists</u>

Frank Sutton
Po Box 134
Williamsburg, KY, 40769
606-304-1097
I buy and trade Whitley, Knox, Bell, Harlen, Laurel, McCreary Counties in KY & Campbell, Claiborne in TN.

Charles Walker
12703 Old Legeslative Rd SW
Frostburg, MD, 21532
301-689-3092
arlieww@hotmail.com
Collect MD scrip, coal mining memorabilia.

Elmer Larry Click
1021 N Jefferson St
Arlington, VA, 22205
703-241-3748
Larryclick@msn.com
Mining lamps, McDowell County scrip, other small mining artifacts.

SEE THE ADDRESS LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE!

Fill out the form below to get your contact & collecting information printed in "SCRIP TALK", allowing other members to reach you with similar interests.

NAME_____ **EMAIL**_____

STREET ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ **ST**____ **ZIPCODE**_____ **PHONE**_____

WHAT DO YOU COLLECT_____

_____

Send above form with dues payment to NSCA Inc., PO Bx 10113 Knoxville, TN., 37939
Questions?? Email the Secretary/Treasurer: **nscainc@gmail.com**
or contact President Bill Campbell: **bwcok@knology.net**

THE NEW MEMBERSHIP W/FREE BOOK OFFER EXPIRED DUE TO BOOK INVENTORIES!

1. One Year Membership - $20
2. Five Year Membership - $85
3. Life Membership - $400 or Senior Life Membership - $300

****

	Sub-Total	Total
Balance from MARCH 2014 Scrip Talk		**$11,374.41**
INCOME:		
Club Dues-Since March '14 Scrip Talk with 3 new members	$700.00	
NET Books Sales collected since March Scrip Talk	525.00	
Pikeville '14 Show room table income	100.00	
Donation to Club	10.00	
Total Income		$1,335.00
EXPENSES:		
1/2 coast of printing Volume 2 (balance due prior to delivery)	$3,318.83	
Pikeville Club Meeting '14 - Show room rental	200.00	
Scrip Talk MARCH 2014 issue---printing & supplies	192.36	
Scrip Talk MARCH 2014 issue---USPS	128.10	
Legal fees, 501(c)(7) reinstatemnet Inv #540 & 586	110.00	
USPS Club PO Box 10113, Knoxville, TN 37939 - one year rental	92.00	
Newspaper advertising for Pikeville Show in Appalachian Express (2 @ $40)	80.00	
8 1/2 x 11" regular paper printing of Volume 1 & 3 ring binder for Pikeville	62.92	
Past Scrip Talk issues for Tom Smith's classroom projet	54.31	
Miscellaneous expenses (mailing ST to new & prospective members & hard drive for Volume 1.)	8.34	
Total Expenses		-$4,246.86
BALANCE for JUNE 2014 Scrip Talk		**$8,462.55**

SEE THE ADDRESS LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE!

Visit the Club's website: www.nationalscripcollectors.org

School Days 1

In February, 2014, NSCA member Thomas Smith visited Mrs. Jennifer Proctor's (Thomas's daughter) students at Summersville and Richwood Middle Schools in central West Virginia. Thomas gave presentations about the history and identification of West Virginia mine scrip. Copies of SCRIP TALK, NSCA tokens, scrip and a copy of EDKINS CATALOGUE OF UNITED STATES COAL COMPANY STORE SCRIP (WV) were generously provided by Fennie and Patsy Thacker, Bill Fugera, Doug Tolley and Billy Campbell. I took articles from past issues of Scrip Talk and combined them into a special news letter that I felt would be of interest to the students. The material and the presentations were of interest to the students and provided them with important information about coal mining history. Student participation was excellent, particularly as they searched for their scrip in the EDKINS Catalogue.

William Brewer B

Caden

Andrew

Hunter

Jacey

3/10/14

Dear Mr. Campbell,

Thank you for helping with our Scrip presentation.

Felicia

Isaac

Sincerely,
Mrs. Jennifer Proctor

Jeffrey

Payton

Brennah

Alex

Trey

Amelia

Carrie

<u>School Days 2</u>

On April 15, 2014 your editor had the honor to give a presentation on coal mining to my grandson Ryan's fourth grade Social Studies class. Ryan attends St Agnes School in Westchester, Pennsylvania. Westchester is 1.5 to 2 hours drive from the Anthracite coal region. My visual aids were a carbide lamp, teapot oil lamp, safety lamp, coal, Pennsylvania scrip and 25 historical and modern coal mining pictures. Ryan also brought his scrip collection and his Lehigh Valley railroad lantern. The Lehigh Railroad was constructed to haul Anthracite coal. My sister Mary Jo provided a small lump of coal for each student. There is a small pile of coal at the family home from the past days of using a coal furnace. One student raised his hand when I asked if any one had been in a coal mine. North of Westchester there are three tourists Anthracite mines.
Ryan was my assistant. My daughter Robin was also there to keep me on my allotted time.
The class has a section on coal mining in their Social Studies class. There were three areas of extra questions from the students. One was describing my child hood in a coal camp. The class was amazed that I had no phone, TV and other goodies taken for granted these days. Another was a picture of Breaker boys working in an Anthracite tipple/coal breaker. I reminded the students these boys were their current age. The third was the use of canaries to detect gas in a mine. It was a fun day for me. I'm sure Thomas and his daughter Jennifer also felt this way during their class presentation. It is important to pass on history. Don't under estimate the youngsters. They are curious. I received a number of thank you notes. Do to space limitations I typed some random samples of them.

All notes were started with--- DEAR RYAN"S GRANDPA—
Thank you for coming to our class. I learned so much. I hope you can come again sometimes. LOVE ABBY.

Thanks for telling us about coal. It's cool to see kids and horses and the coal. LOVE NELAN

Thank you for teaching me about your life and how you grew up. The coal mines must have been really cool. You really taught me a lot Thank you for coming. CIRDAN.

Thank you for the great presentation. I learned so much like the canaries they used to see if the coal mine was safe. CASEY

I liked your presentation. One thing I learned was that kids my age had to work in the mines. ALEXANDER CAHILL

Thank you for coming to my class to talk about coal. You are the best Grandpa in the world. I hope you find that piece of Boulder Dam scrip to finish your collection. LOVE YOU, YOUR GRANDSON

Thank you for coming. It was clever how you started your talk with the bird first. JACKSON

Thank you for teaching me about coal mining. So coal mining can be deadly. Harrison W.

Thanks for teaching me what it will be like to work in a coal miner. It looks real fun. I will hope to try it some day. THOMAS HAMM

Thank you for teaching us about coal and how it is used. I learned a lot. I bet you had a lot of experience. LILLY WARD

Thank you soo much for the visit and lesson about coal. I never knew miners took a poor canary in the mines. ALLISON

Thank you soo much for coming in. I learned much about coal and the miner's life. I learned there are different types of coal. I loved your presentation. It was really interesting. ELLA MCGRORY

Thanks for the presentation on coal mines. I've always been interested in coal mines. I always thought people who worked in coal mines lived in a regular neighborhood and used regular money, not scrip. I enjoy learning about coal mines and hope that another presentation is in store. CARALINA B

Thank you for coming in. It was really fun. I learned a lot about coal and mining. I think it's a really cool job. BRENDON

Unfortunately I misplaced another thank you note from a young lady named MAVE.

Coal Breaker, Shamokin, Pa. 1974

COAL BREAKERS

By Bill Fugera

A coal breaker is a coal processing plant which breaks coal into various useful sizes and also remove impurities from the coal such as slate. It is a forerunner of the modern coal preparation plant.

A coal tipple was used at a bituminous coal mine, where removing impurities was important but sorting by size was only a secondary, minor concern. Coal breakers were always used with or without a tipple at anthracite mines. Breakers were used primarily in the U S in Pennsylvania between 1800 and the 1950s.

The main function of a coal breaker is to break coal into pieces and sort these pieces into categories of nearly uniform sizes The second function of the breaker is to remove impurities such as slate and then grade the coal on the basis of remaining impurities. This sorting by size is particurly important for anthracite coal. To burn efficiently, air must flow evenly around anthracite. Most anthracite coal is sold in uniform sizes. In the 1910s, there were six commercial sizes of coal. Coal smaller than 0.09375inches was considered useless due to the inability to separate it from impurities.

Coal breakers were generally located as close to the anthracite mine entrance as possible, so as to minimize the distance the coal had to travel before processing. Ideally, coal breakers were placed so that the top of the breaking plant was equal to or slightly below the mine mouth so that gravity would move the coal to the breaking plant. Where this was not possible, coal would be hoisted to the top of the coal breaking plant. A boiler and boiler house would be located nearby to provide power for the hoist, moving screens, jigs, and crushers along with an engine house, pumps, and pump house to supply the coal washing water and the hoist. The typical coal breaking plant was often eight or nine stories tall, sometimes rising 150 feet high or more.

In the typical coal breaking plant at the beginning of the 20th century, the coal entered the plant at the upper floor and slid down a gently inclined picker table where breaker boys removed obvious impurities such as rocks and large pieces of slate and threw them down chutes to the slate pile The breakers also removed obviously clean lumps of coal and sent them down a separate clean coal chute for crushing. Lumps intermixed with impurities would go down a third chute for crushing and further cleaning, On the second floor level coal would be roughly sorted. The third from the top was the crushing level. Most coal was still lump coal at this stage, and needed to be crushed to create smaller more marketable product.

On the fourth level and down, coal was further cleaned of impurities. Although breaker boys worked at all levels of the coal breaker, most of the removal of impurities by hand occurred at this level. Some picking did occur on the ground level of the breaker where boys would locate good pieces of coal in the slate and return it to the clean coal stream.

Coal and slate were received at the ground level near by. Very fine dry slate was sometimes separated from the heavier slate by forced air and blown through tubes to a separate pile. Wet slate was generally held in settling tanks or behind a coal slurry impoundment dam to allow particulate to settle out of the water. The clean coal emerging from the coal breaker already sorted into its respective sizes, was collected primarily for rail cars and delivered to market.

Before entering the breaker, the coal would be crushed and sorted in the tipple and if, necessary and if water was available washed. All coal was screened in the tipple as it came out of the mine so that steam- sized or smaller pieces could travel to the coal washer and/or breaker. Chunks of coal, which were too large, were than crushed in the tipple until it passed through a screen.

Prior to 1830, bituminous and anthracite coal received little processing, The miner would use a sledgehammer to break up large lumps of coal, then use a rake whose teeth were set two inches apart to collect the larger pieces of coal for transport to the surface. Smaller lumps of coal were considered nonmarkable and left in the mine. Beginning about 1830, surface processing of coal began. Lumps of coal were placed on plates of perforated cast iron and men known as breakers would hammer on the coal until it was in lumps small enough to fall through the holes. The coal fell into a second screen, where it was shaken by hand , animal, steam, or water power and the smaller lumps sorted. The broken and screened coal was worth much more than lump coal.

Although bituminous coal had been widely burned as fuel since ancient times, anthracite coal did not come into widespread use until the 1820s. Shortly after the start of the 19th century, experiments in the US showed that if anthracite coal lumps were more uniform in size and air flowed more evenly around the fuel, anthracite would burn hotter, more cleanly, and for a longer period of time than bituminous coal. Jesse Fell was the first to successfully burn anthracite coal on an open air grate. His method and discovery in PA in 1808 led to the widespread use of coal as the fuel source that helped to foster America's industrial revolution. Anthracite coal began to be widely used in Wales in 1813 and France by 1814, and throughout the eastern US by 1828. Efforts were soon made to discover ways to process anthracite coal to achieve the desired uniformity.

The modern coal breaker can be traced to 1844. Joseph Battin, a supervisor at a coal gas manufacturing plant in Philadelphia, invented the first coal breaker. This was two cast iron rollers (one with teeth, one with holes to accept the teeth) through which the coal was crushed before it rolled down a chute and then through an inclined cylindrical screen. The screen had a mesh, which was fine toward the front and became progressively less so toward the end. Larger chunks of coal, falling inside the cylinder as it rotated, broke up and eventually passed through the screen. Impurities, which were heavier tended to exit the breaker at the end of the screen. The sorted coal would then be collected in bins below the screen, and transported to market. Gideon Bast licensed the

technology from Battin, and erected the first commercial coal breaker in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, on February 28, 1844.

A number of coal processing machines –such as rollers, crushers, washers, and screens--- were developed in Europe and later utilized in the US. By 1866, the coal breaker in the US had taken the form most recognized today, with multiple stories and numerous screening processes and mechanical sorting devices. The first steam-powered shaking screens were used in the US in 1890 and the first steam-powered coal washers installed in 1892.

Until about 1900, nearly all anthracite coal breakers were labor-intensive. The removal of impurities was done by hand, usually by boys between the ages of eight and 12 years known as breaker boys. The use of breaker boys began in the US around 1866. The breaker boys would sit on wooden seats, perched over chutes and conveyor belts, picking slate and other impurities out of the coal. Breaker boys worked 10 hours a day for six days a week. The work was hazardous. Breaker boys were forced to work without gloves so that they could handle the slick coal better. The slate, however, was sharp, and boys would leave work with their fingers cut and bleeding. Many breaker boys lost fingers to the rapidly moving conveyor belts, while others, moving about the plant, had their feet, hands, arms, and legs amputated when they moved among the machinery and accidentally slipped under the belts or into the gears. Many died when they fell into the gears of the machinery, their bodies only retrieved at the end of the working day. Others were caught in the rush of coal, and crushed to death or smothered. The dry coal kicked up so much dust that the breaker boys sometimes wore lamps on their heads to see, and asthma and black lung disease were common.

Public outrage against the use of breaker boys was so widespread that in 1885 Pennsylvania enacted a law forbidding the employment of anyone under the age of 12 from working in a coal breaker. But the law was poorly enforced, and many employers and families forged birth certificates or other documents so children could work.
Estimates of the number of breaker boys at work in the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania vary widely, and official statistics are generally considered by historians to undercount the numbers significantly. Estimates include 20,000 breaker boys working in the state in 1880, 18,000 working in 1900, 13,133 working in 1902 and 24,000 working in 1907. Technological innovations in the 1890s and 20th century such as mechanical and water separators designed to remove impurities from coal significantly reduced the need for breaker boys, but the adoption of the new technology was slow. By the 1910s, the use of breaker boys was finally dropping because of improvements in technology, stricter child labor laws, and compulsory schooling laws. The practice of employing children in coal breakers largely ended by 1920 because of the efforts of the National Child Labor Committee, sociologist and photographer Lewis Hine, and the National Consumers League, who educated the public about the practice and succeeded in passing child labor laws.

The regulation of coal breakers came slowly in the US. In the United Kingdom, the government enacted a law in the mid-19th century requiring that coal breakers be built away from mine entrances. But in the US, neither the federal government nor the states adopted regulation of coal breakers until after many lives had been lost. Two disasters prompted the adoption of legislation. The first occurred on September 6, 1869, when a small explosion at the Avondale mine in Plymouth, Pennsylvania blew flames up the mine shaft. The wooden breaker built over the mine opening caught fire and collapsed, trapping and killing 110 workers in the mine below. No legislative or regulatory action was taken at that time. But in 1871, a fire destroyed the wooden breaker built over a mine opening in West Pittston, Pennsylvania, trapping and killing 24 miners. Despite a shift away from wooden construction of coal breakers and opposition from the coal industry, the state of Pennsylvania adopted a law in 1885 requiring that coal breakers be situated at least 200 feet from the opening of any mine.

A number of inventions in the late 19th and early 20th century led to the use of mechanical devices for separating impurities  from coal in coal breakers.
Screens and sorters were used for dry coal. An example was a sorting bar. These were set in a rectangle 3 to 6 feet wide and 8 to 12 feet long which were close together where the coal was poured in but which spread progressively further , allowing the coal to be roughly separated by the size of each lump.. The bars were at an incline, and the heavier slate, ash, and sulphur generally slid off the bars and down a chute which delivered it to slate pile while the coal fell through.

To handle wet coal, various types of jigs were used. Coal jigs separated coal from impurities by using gravity. Since the relative density of uniformity sized pieces of coal, slate, and sulfur vary, pieces of each element will descend through water at different speeds, allowing them to be separated. An example is a well known process called a sluice box. Sluice boxes were used to separate small pieces of coal from heavier impurities. Riffles or low ridges set horizontal to the flow of water down the sluice would capture the heavier impurities while permitting the lighter coal to move on.

From 1936 to 1964, the amount of coal processed in wet jigs in the US rose to 146 million tons per year from 27 million tons per year.

Separating, sorting, and jig technology continued to advance in the 20th century. The first compressed air sorter for fine coal (pea and smaller) was installed in the US in 1916. Major innovations in the pneumatic cleaning of coal were made in 1924, 1932, and 1941.

Methods of drying coal through the use of forced air dryers, heat and centrifuges were adopted by American coal companies throughout the 20th century. As many coal breakers handled heavier loads of coal, wooden buildings were abandoned in favor of structures made entirely of steel and reinforced concrete. In the mid-20th century, oscillating table sized sluices were widely adopted by the American coal industry, allowing even finer grades of coal to be processed and captured. Other processing devices such as froth flotation jigs and disc filters were also employed.

With changing demand for coal in the post World War II era led to the abandonment and consolidation of many coal breaking plants. Tipples, coal washing plants, and coal breakers were often merged into a single plant to achieve economies of scale. Automation led to very significant reductions in the number of personnel needed to run plants. Smaller modular facilities sometimes required only a single operator. These coal preparation plants often accepted coal from several mines, and many were built far away from operating mines. By the 1970's many coal breaker plants around the world were being shut down in favor of newer, larger coal preparation plants.

WINDING GULF COLLIERIES 4-22-14
DAVY, WV 747 (McDowell)

By Billy Campbell

April 16, 2014 Jay Chatman sent me an email asking if Winding Gulf Collieries Superior Stores moved from Davis, WV to Davy, WV. Mr. Chatman noted that in 1929, Justus Collins of Winding Gulf Collieries who owned Superior Pocahontas Coal Company at Davy, WV and Louisville Coal and Coke Co. in Mercer County changed the names to Winding Gulf Collieries Superior Stores at Davy and Winding Gulf Collieries Louisville stores in Mercer County. After the name change Justus Collins built a briquette plant on the location of Superior Pocahontas Coal Company at the mouth of ASCO hollow, Davy, WV to compete with N. R. & P. briquette plant in Berwind, WV.

Alex P. Schust in his book Billion Dollar Coalfield noted;
1. Davy was Hallsville, the name was changed to Davy in 1901.
2. Superior Pocahontas Coal Company incorporated in May, 1906 and acquired various mining properties about that same time in Davy.
3. August, 1929 Superior Pocahontas Coal Company of Davy transferred all its assets to Winding Gulf Collieries.

Winding Gulf Collieries ordered ISC scrip 8-14-1929 to be sent to Davy, Goodwill and Winding Gulf WV.

In the July, 1930 and July, 1932 Bradstreet, Winding Gulf Coal Company is shown to be operating in Davy. The only coal connected business in Davis, WV during that time is Buxton & Landstreet and The Coffman fisher Co. There is no mention of Winding Gulf in Davis, WV.

Conclusion; The listing of Davis 743 in the Edkins catalogue is moved to Davy 747 and Davis 743 is deleted. The "A" series of Davis 743 is now "G" series of Davy 747 and the "B" series of Davis 743 is now "H" series of Davy 747.

Contact List

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Collect West Virginia merchant tokens
Greenbrier County coal scrip
West Virginia enclosed cents
West Virginia lumber scrip

Moundsville Mine in 1920's

Convicts in Coal Mines
By Bill Fugera

Last fall I was in Moundsville, West Virginia visiting friends. Sam had taken me to an animal shelter to look at a coonhound that had been turned into the shelter. While at the animal shelter, I noticed some near by remnants of what looked like a former coal mine. I learned this was an abandoned coal mine that was worked by inmates from the West Virginia State Penitentiary. Information relative to the history of the mine is scarce.

What I did learn----
It was a shaft mine and was started in September, 1920 and was completed and ready for operation in August, 1921. The cost was $15,000 not counting prison labor. Based on the price of coal the mine was saving the state an annual fuel bill of $15,000. Quite a sum in today's dollar. All work in and around the mine was done by prison labor, with one outside man in charge. The prisoners were all trusties and stayed at the farm camp, which was near the mine. Seven and one half days a month additional time served was allowed them, the same that was given those employed in road camps and other outside work. The miners were said to be very interested in the mine and did their work well. To comply with the state mining laws, a second shaft was opened for an air supply. This costs was $ 2,500. In the fall of 1924 a third shaft was driven to the Pittsburgh vein which coal was a higher quality than what was being mined at the original level of 90 feet. Again this was done by prison labor under the direction of a mine superintendent.

After learning of the Moundsville mine, I did some research and learned that prison inmates working in coal mines in the US was some what common.

Alabama----
Between 1875 and 1928, the state and counties of Alabama profited from a form of prison labor known as the convict lease system. Under this system companies and individuals paid fees to state and county governments in exchange for the labor of prisoners on farms, at lumberyards and coal mines. Following their convictions, prisoners were transported directly to the work site and remained there for the duration of their sentences.
By the 1880s, nearly all of the several thousand state and county prisoners working under the convict leasing system labored in coal mines located around Birmingham.

The year 1883 marked a turning point in the emerging convict leasing system. Under financial reforms championed by Warden John Hollis Bankhead, the state legislature approved a plan that leased the majority of prisoners to a select number of coal operators. The Pratt Coal and Iron Company, the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company, and the Sloss Iron and Steel Company received almost exclusive rights to the labor of prisoners. In 1888 TCI negotiated a ten year contract that entitled it to all able bodied state prisoners. In exchange, TCI agreed to pay the state between $9 and $18.50 per month for each prisoner, depending on their abilities. Under Bankhead's plan, the coal companies built and operated prisons at the mine sites, which were clustered in the coal rich areas surrounding Birmingham.

Prisoners could complete their sentences and gain freedom. Many were literate. Once they completed their quota for the day, they were entitled to earn extra cash for working overtime. Their skills as miners enabled them to continue working in the Birmingham vicinity as free men upon their release, and one study estimated that half of all released prisoners did so.

The largest coal mining accident in Alabama claimed 128 men on April 7, 1911. The mine was the Banner mine owned by Pratt Consolidated Coal Co. and was operated mostly by prisoners leased to the company by state and county governments. Most of the miners were black and many were serving time for minor offenses. Three days before the Banner explosion two black convicts died from lack of oxygen in the mines. Mining companies such as Pratt Consolidated Coal Co. derived too much benefit from cheap workers who couldn't form unions or protest working conditions. The state leaders and county sheriffs were addicted to the money they raked in from rounding up men, mostly black, on trivial crimes and selling them to the highest bidder. Of the prisoners killed at Banner Mine, all but five were black. Nearly a third were serving sentences of 20 days or less for misdemeanors such as violating probation and vagrancy. This horrible accident did little to change the state's practice of selling convicts into deadly labor. Despite calls from progressives in the state in the aftermath of the accident, the convict lease system remained until 1928 in Alabama and the Banner Mine became the sole mine for state prisoners less than a year after the explosion. The economic interests involved could not be overridden even by the shock of the Banner explosion. Less than two weeks after the explosion, more prisoners were brought in to work the Banner Mine.

The Sloss Company continued to work county prisoners at its mines until 1928, but in that year, prison mining and the convict leasing system finally came to a halt. Alabama was the last state in the nation to abolish the convict leasing following Florida by some five years.

Tennessee -----

In the area of Petros is the closed Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary. It was once a major part of the Tennessee penal system. It was one of the oldest penitentiaries in the US. Abandoned coal mines nearby are the reason Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary existed.

Tennessee was one of the southern states that had the convict leasing system. In 1889, the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company came to the state and asked to lease a large number of convicts to work in the coal mines near Briceville, Lake City (then known as Coal Creek), and other places.

The first insurrection by free miners took place in 1881 in Briceville. Throughout 1891 and 1892 free miners burned coal company buildings and released hundreds of prisoners from stockades sometimes loading them on trains and sending them off. This occurred several times around Briceville. The Tennessee state militia had to intervene several times and enforce the convict labor system. Dozens of miners and state militiamen were killed or wounded in small arm skirmishes. The lease system ended in1896 replaced by Brushy Mountain.

In 1893 the state legislature approved a bill allowing for the construction of a new prison near the mines to house and work the convicts which would later become Brushy Mountain.
The state purchased 13,000 acres for the prison site. A new 20 mile railroad was constructed from Herman by prisoners so coal could be hauled from the mines. Coke ovens were also built. Men that had worked the mines continued to do so at the new prison while other convicts worked the ovens, coal washer and tipple. By 1896 the miners were pulling 1,000 tons a day out of the mines.
Working hundreds of prisoners in cramped and dark tunnels was risky and on several occasions there had been escape attempts, hostage taking and sabotage.
In 1959 a large rebellion inside the mountain of 95 men took place. The prisoners eventually got starved into surrendering but after it ended booby traps were found inside. These mines operated until 1966. Brushy Mountain was the only unionized prison in the state The prison closed in 2009.

Colorado----
During the Great Coalfield Strike of 1913 and 1914 the Colorado state prison obtained the lease for the Nonac Mine of Canon City. The mine was operated by ten prisoners and produced 50 tons of coal per day. The governor secured the lease and approved the operation due to the fact that the prison could not get the coal it needed to maintain necessary operations during the strike. This was the first time in Colorado's history that coal was mined by a state agency.
Ever since the strike began management had been held up in the price of coal. The big companies, which had contracted to supply coal to the state were unable to meet the terms of their agreement. After the shut down took place the governor commented they were compelled to buy coal wherever they could get it and pay exorbitant prices for it. Thus the need for the Nonac mine. The governor commented that all coal mined at Nonac would only be used for the prison and other public institutions as needed. However it is noted that after the strike and into 1932 the prison was still operating the mine.

Kansas----
The state prison for Kansas was in Leavenworth, an area of significant coal deposits. Outside the main prison wall, a small enclosure contained the shafts, and surface machinery of the penitentiary coal mine. Guided by Warden Hopkins's recommendation, the state had begun sinking a shaft in 1879 to gain access to the rich vein of coal that lay beneath the prison. The 772 foot shaft was completed in 1882. By year's end, coal valued at more than $40,000 had been mined. This money added to income obtained from other labor contracts made the institution self supporting for the first time. At this time the mine employed more than 100 convicts in 1883. The Penitentiary Mine also provided coal to state agencies for their use. This mine was one of five coal mining operations in the area.
In 1883 another air shaft was sunk causing a one year budget deficit. However with an average miner count at 258, coal production increased to $242,822 by 1908. This mine was lighted by electricity from the prison. This was an interesting concept for that time in history.
In 1899 there was pressure by unions and mining interests on the legislature to pass a law prohibiting public sale of Penitentiary coal to the public.
The coal mine closed in 1947 due to high operating costs and low demand.

MILITARY POST SUTLER / EARLY COMPANY STORE ?

By Bill Fugera

All military personal and their families have access to a post exchange or commonly called the PX. Merchandise is inexpensive and plentiful.

Prior to the PX the military had canteens and before that the post sutler. The post sutler was a civilian who sold goods to soldiers. The list of items he sold was almost endless. This list consisted of food, newspapers and journals, tobacco, shoe backing, spoons and forks, clothing and luxury items such as canned milk, fruit, vegetables and fish. The army did not consider writing supplies important, so soldiers had to purchase pens, pencils, ink wells, and desks from the sutler if they wanted to write letters.

While the army had a weekly issue of meat, hardtack, flour, potatoes, beans, rice, coffee, sugar, vinegar and salt, much of the hardtack was wormy and the beef rotten. Instead of cooking for themselves, many soldiers threw away the rations and went to the1860s version of the fast food restaurant -- the sutler.

However, all was not well with the sutler's merchandise. Capt Henry A. Castle of Co. A, 137th infantry, described a sutler's inventory: " Effete (feeble)cigars – bunch of grass filling wrapped in genuine Havana onion leaves.; rancid sardines, plug tobacco in advanced state of ossification (bone formation); misfit imitations of standard monarchial beverages; wrinkled pocket mirrors, spoiled ink, spongy paper, eyeglass needles, pointless pens, bologna sausages of the conglomerate, petrified. And yet every soldier became accustomed to answering two basic questions: where his regiment was camped and where the sutler had set up his hut or tent.

In Halltown, Virginia, a sutler sold cat and dog meat pies at 25 cents an ounce, but soldiers were reluctant to eat pieces from different pies at the same time, fearing that the ingredients on coming together in one stomach would remember and revive their ancient feuds.

Sutlers usually made their own money or scrip. Usually they had metal tokens about the size of a penny or small cardboard chits. The sutler's name, unit and value were stamped or printed on the chits. Sutler scrip varied from 3 cents to a dollar. Soldiers bought with real US money and received change in scrip. By replacing real money with their own scrip, sutlers made sure that the soldiers had to come back and spend the rest of their pay in the sutler's store.

Sutlers offered officers special gifts so that they would not report them for overcharging the soldiers. This was risky for the officers. If he got caught he could face being court-martialed. Still, many sutlers were able to charge very high prices for their merchandise. Some sutlers were able to sell their merchandise at a 300 % profit. Because the sutlers prices were high, soldiers often thought of these civilians as both a necessity and a nuisance. Sutlers were taxed by their unit, usually a percentage of their total monthly business. The money went into a special fund like the band, education of children born to soldiers or to stack the library. This fund also brought fruits and vegetables and special items to wounded soldiers in hospitals.

Every military post could have one sutler, to be appointed by the secretary of war. A sutler held the job for three years, unless the sutler did not follow the rules.

If there were an empty building, the sutler could use it for his store. He was responsible for keeping it in good working order. If there were no buildings the sutler could construct one. The sutler did not receive living quarters, transportation for himself or his goods or any military pay. Sometimes the sutler sold directly from a wagon. All prices, however, had to be posted in the store or the wagon.

The sutler could not allow a soldier to be in debt to him for more than one third of the soldier's monthly pay. Three days before the last day of every month, the sutler gave the commander a note telling all the charges he had for the enlisted man. The note was presented to the men for payment. The sutler sat at the pay table with his books and accounts, and received payment from the paymaster under the watchful eye of the commanding officer. This is why sutlers always showed up at payday, but were absent when goods were short or customers had used up their credit.

The sutler's main completion came from the family of the soldiers. Packages sent from home contained such items as canned food, clothing, writing supplies, medicine, personal articles and family items. Federal families heard of the sutler's effect on their loved ones and would send what amounted to "care packages" to their boys via the Adams Express Company, probably a forerunner of today's UPS. If these packages were not stolen from the various warehouses in the north, then they finally arrived at the proper destination, but often so late that most of the food was spoiled.

Confederate soldiers also had sutlers, but they were few and far between because the Confederacy suffered from an almost complete lack of items considered as sutler's supplies during the war. Most goods for the Confederacy, civilian and military, were brought in by blockade runners -- specially designated ships used for dodging the Union's naval blockade and supplying goods to a strangled Confederacy.

Because of corruption, traders authorized to sell merchandise at each post replaced the sutlers in 1867. In 1889 the War Department authorized canteens, thus putting post traders out of business. On July 25, 1895 General Order 46 set the standard for the concept and mission of today's PX system.

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A REMINDER, "+" AFTER YOUR AD MEANS IT IS TIME TO RENEW

Moment in NSCA History- Picture May 1,1988 at Duffield, VA

By Joe C. Copeland

Pictured members kneeling from left to right; R.R. Tippy - OakRidge, Tn; Kenneth Large – Beaver Dam, Ky; Roy Wood – Wilsonville, Al; Raymond Cole – South Williamson, Ky; Darrell Crotty – Kegley, WV; W. E. "Bill" Williams – Oak Ridge, Tn.
Standing left to right; Mark Ballard – Marion, Il; Paul Jensen – Villa Hills, Ky; Edgar " Cotton " Craft – Maryville, Tn; Paul Greenburg – Ft. Lauderdale, Fl; C. F. Colley – Ethel, WV; Crawford Blakeman – Middlesboro, Ky; Fennie Thacker – Haysi, VA; Bobby Rutherford – Pineville, Ky.
John Taylor – Kingsport, Tn; Joe C. Copeland – Oak Ridge, Tn; Howard Short – Homes Mills, Ky; Walter Caldwell – Fayetteville, WV; Dave Whisman – Prestonburg, Ky.

My sincerest thanks to good friend Jerry Schaeper for assistance with the following article. Also thanks to good friend Fennie Thacker for use of the picture and the May 1, 1998 NSCA membership list which many of you may like so you see all of our members alive and deceased.

If you didn't know Jim Thompson you missed something. He hosted a scrip collectors show in Bridgeport, WV at a motel he owned. Let me tell you, I live in TN and thought I'd never get to Bridgeport because it was so far. He put on a ramps, stinky as anything and moonshine dinner. He owned several coal companies, heavy equipment and no telling what else. He was very down to earth. He would come to the scrip shows in jeans and t – shirts or short sleeved casual shirts. He collected anything WV; coal scrip, merchant tokens, Civil War tokens, National banknotes, obsolete banknotes, etc. We were friends and I sure miss him. He died of a heart attack probably 25 + years ago. At the scrip meetings if he wanted a token/scrip it was his. No one else had the money to compete with him. Some members actually ran him up to very high prices knowing they were not going to get the token and to "dump" it on him. A percentage of the sales went to the treasury.

We used to have great catered dinners and the auctions were very lively. Back then we had "room hopping". That was when some members would arrive on Thurs. night. Most of the room hopping was done on Friday, when most people arrived. The show ran Friday thru Sunday. Members would leave their room doors open and all were invited in to buy, sell trade in each room. Several rooms had complimentary booze, beer and munchies. Tons of deals were made on that night. The shows were very busy on Friday and Saturday. On Sunday people started closing up and going home about noon. I recall one show some place in WV that on Sunday a couple came all the way from Ohio to buy mining lamps about noon. There were only about four people still set up so it was a bad trip for them. I doubt if they ever went to another scrip meeting.

Many wonderful NSCA members have passed on. We still have great members but not nearly as many in numbers as the " good old days ". Sadly some of those departed members took volumes of information about coal companies and coal scrip to their graves having not written down any of the valuable information.

One show we had was in Nelsonville, Ohio at Hocking College. This was another tremendously long drive by myself. I wondered if I'd make it from TN. The Dean of the college promised us he'd have posters on all the poles in and near town advertising our meeting. He also promised banners hanging over the road at each end of town. We got there and he had done none of what he promised, not one poster or banner.

We had some small unofficial NSCA meetings in Middlesboro, Ky at the power company building with probably 10-15 people attending and lots of scrip changing hands there via selling, trading and buying. Some of the area members were of the age that they couldn't travel extensive miles to shows so it was a true blessing for them to have some meetings there. Ah yes, how I yearn for the good old days of big scrip shows, big auctions, big attendances, wonderful comradeships. Lots of laughter, joking, and kidding kept the shows very lively.